

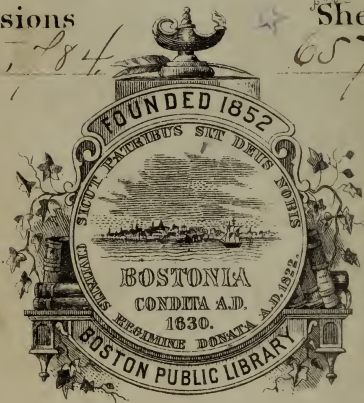


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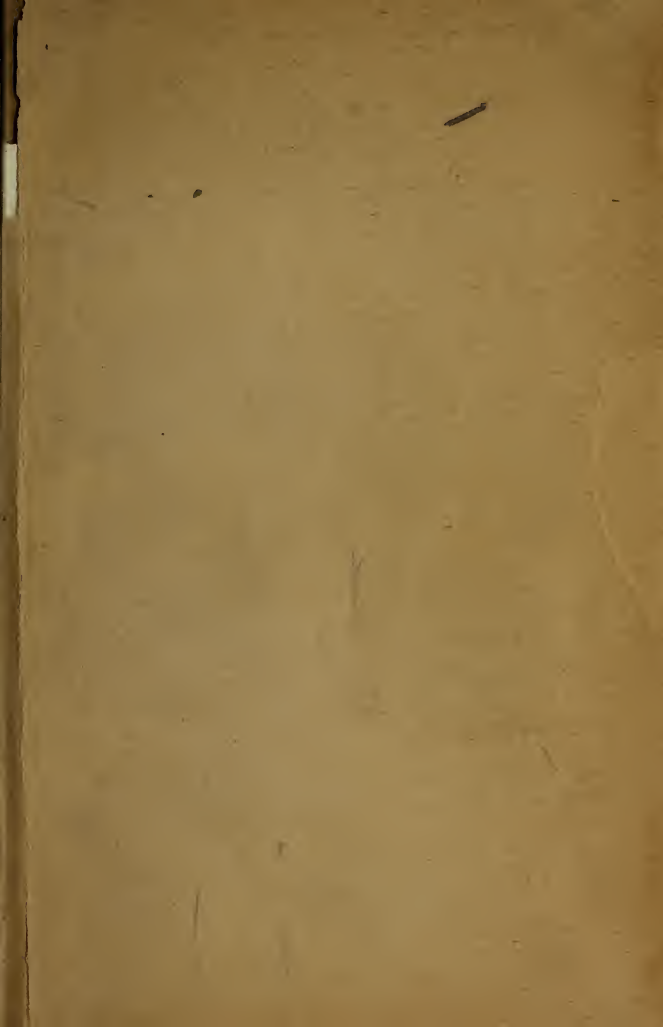
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Received

Nov. 21, 1884





GUSTAVUS THE THIRD,

OR,

THE MASKED BALL!

AN HISTORICAL DRAMA,

IN

Three Acts.

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By H. M. MILNER, Esq.

*Author of The Tower of Nesle; Frankenstein, or The Man and the Monster; Alonzo, the Brave; The Jew of Lubeck; &c. &c. &c.*

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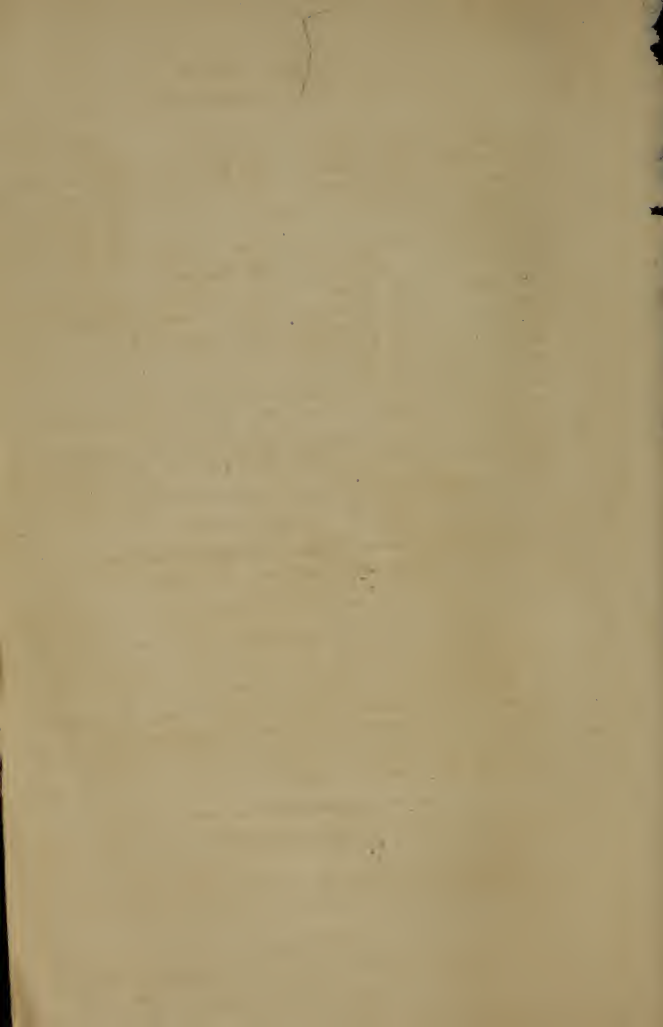
AS PERFORMED AT THE  
London Theatres.

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EMBELLISHED WITH A FINE ENGRAVING,  
By Mr. FINDLAY, from an Original Drawing, taken in the Theatre.

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LONDON :  
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. DUNCOMBE & CO.  
9, MIDDLE ROW, HOLBORN.



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	Garrick.	Victoria	Covent Garden.
<i>Gustavus</i> . . . .	Mr. Gomersal	Mr. Abbott	Mr. Warde
<i>Ankarstrom</i> ..	Mr. Freer	Mr. Butler	Mr. H. Phillips
<i>Dehorn</i> . . . . .	Mr. Denvil	Mr. W. Vining	Mr. Seguin
<i>Voralberg</i> . . . .	Mr. Featherstone	Mr. Hunt	Mr. Perkins
<i>Lillienhorn</i> . . . .			Mr. Templeton
<i>D'Armfeldt</i> ..	Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Chippendale	Mr. Baker
<i>Spiegel</i> . . . . .		Mr. Forester	
<i>Klaubart</i> . . . .	Mr. Sharpe	Mr. Doyne	Mr. Wilson
<i>Oscar</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Conquest	Miss P. Horton	Miss Shirreff
<i>Roslin</i> . . . . .	Mr. H. Lewis	Mr. Debar	
<i>Segel</i> . . . . .	Mr. Lambert	Mr. Bender	
<i>Rostock</i> . . . . .	Mr. Hart	Mr. Addison	
<i>Karle</i> . . . . .	Mr. Widdicombe	Mr. Heath	
<i>Christian</i> . . . .	Mr. S. Foster	Mr. Latham	Mr. Bedford
<i>Amelia</i> . . . . .	Mrs. Pope	Miss Mason	Miss Inverarity
<i>Arvedson</i> . . . .	Mrs. Wheatley	Mrs. Egerton	Mrs. Fitzwilliam

Ambassadors, Nobles, Peasants, Servants, &c. &c.

Time of Representation, 1 hour, 45 minutes.

First Produced, Nov. 11th, 1833.

### COSTUME.

*Gustavus*—Elegant morning robe of deep coloured velvet, trimmed with fur. Second dress, that of a sailor. Third dress, a black domino, with a rose-coloured cross on the breast.

*Count Ankarstrom* and the whole of the Court Ministers and Nobles, are dressed in the court dresses of the time of George III.

*The Conspirators*, Foreign Ambassadors, and Military Nobles—in military uniforms of the same period.

*Oscar*—Military officer of the period. In the masquerade, a fancy page dress.

In the last Scene, the whole wear masquerade dominoes.

*Countess Ankarstrom*—Velvet robe, trimmed with fur. Second dress, a cloak and velvet cap, trimmed with fur and embroidered. Third dress, a domino.

*Arvedson*—Gypsy's dress, with extensive draperies, and head covering, of drab cloth.





## GUSTAVUS THE THIRD.

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### ACT I.

SC NE I.—*A Saloon in the Palace of the King of Sweden.—*  
*On the R. H. is a door leading to the King's Apartment. The*  
*Foreign Ambassadors, Nobility, &c. are assembled on the*  
*R. H., on the L. H. DEHORN, VORALBERG, and other Conspi-*  
*rators—near them ROSLIN, and SEGEL.*

1 *Nobleman.* The King not risen yet? I trust no indisposition withholds him from his usual occupations.

2 *Noble* No, my lord, I warrant me; but as for occupation, 'tis difficult to decide what with his majesty may be deemed unusual; his genius and activity range over so vast a field of science and of literature, that conjecture cannot prescribe its limits. His majesty sleeps not, and is not idling, I pledge myself.

*Deh.* (*aside to Voralberg*) Frivolous tyrant! shallow pretender to universal genius! who keeps the flower of his empire waiting here, whilst he, forsooth, is arranging the costume of a fancy ball.

*Vor.* An artist king, admired by all his subjects—who, in a breath, discusses the plan of a campaign, a code of laws, and the plot of an opera.

*Deh.* He may live to learn that this good land of Sweden contains men who will not be directed like the artists of a theatre.

*Enter OSCAR, R. H. D.*

*Osc.* The King, my lords—the King!

[*A general murmur runs round of "The King!"*]

*Enter GUSTAVUS, R. H. D. in a rich morning robe of velvet, trimmed with fur.*

*Gust.* Gentlemen representing foreign powers, my noble brothers in arms, my friends, my children, army, and people, my

best thanks greet you all. [*The Representatives of the People present petitions, which he eagerly collects.*] Communicate to me freely your sufferings—your wants; 'tis mine to alleviate—to remove them. This is the only pleasure that compensates me for the cares of royalty. Ah, Roslin! may Apollo ever direct thy pencil—I will find it work. And thou, Segell, the Phidias of Sweden, sharpen thy chisel, man—it shall not want for subjects. 'Tis by plucking single laurels from such men as you that I expect to form my wreath of glory. (*aside*) Glory—dare I talk of glory, when I suffer a passion at war with friendship and with honour to lord it o'er my soul? Oh, Amelia! is not his triumph far prouder than the bravest warrior's—who can conquer the evil passions of his own heart? [*Klaubart and Armfeldt each approach him with papers.*]

*Klau. and Arm.* Sire!

*Gust.* Now, my good lords, your pleasure?

*Klau.* The state of our reserves for war.

*Arm.* The Reports of the Judges and Courts of Justice.

*Osc.* The List of ladies to be invited to to-morrow's ball, your majesty.

*Gust.* Which I dare say you, my pretty page, consider of as much consequence as all the rest. Give me your memorials, friends, none shall escape my notice.

*Osc.* Your majesty, like Cæsar, is capable of dictating to more than one secretary at a time.

*Gust.* (*inspecting the papers*) "Account of the Stores in our various Arsenals, and the effective state of our Naval and Military Force." Yes, my friends, though upwards of eighty years are past, Russia shall yet atone the disgraces of Pultowa, and Charles the Madman yet shall be avenged. (*reads*) "The Franchise promised by Gustavus Vasa to be considered and extended." Aye, to be sure it shall! what to a king so sure, so dear a safeguard as his people's love? And now, my pretty page, the list of ladies.

*Osc.* It comprises none but the most beautiful, your majesty.

*Gust.* So I would have it, Cupid of my court. (*reads*) "The Duchesses of Holberg and of Gothland—the Countess Ankarstrom"—

*Osc.* (*aside*) Ha! ha! I always notice how, at mention of her name, his majesty seems agitated.

*Deh.* (*aside to Vor.*) Some sudden thought seems now to brood upon his mind, engrossing every faculty. Think you that some suspicion shoots across—

*Gust.* (*making a sign for all to retire*) Your pardon, lords and

gentlemen—for a time I fain would be alone. [*Gustavus seems lost in contemplation, and throws himself in a chair. All retire. L. H. Oscar the last—as he approaches the entrance he meets Ankarstrom.*]

*Osc.* His majesty expressed a wish to be alone ! but to his dearest friend, Count Ankarstrom, I know he is at all times accessible. (*Points Ank. to Gust. and retires.*)

*An.* What dark unusual gloom involves my king ?

*Gust.* Vain is the struggle ! My heart cannot accomplish it. Amelia, sweet Amelia, it is all thine own. (*turning round, perceives Ankarstrom.*) Heavens ! her husband here !

*An.* Why should the rival of the haughty Czar—he on whom the eyes of Europe are fixed with admiration—permit one shade of care to cross his brow ?

*Gust.* Because, dear Ankarstrom, 'tis one thing to be prosperous, and another to be happy.

*An.* Your majesty, I am sure, does not do me the injustice to doubt how joyfully I would purchase your happiness at the price of all my own.

*Gust. (aside)* I cannot, by confession of my wrongs, bend to degrade myself before the man I love. There are some cares, dear Count, that even into the bosom of sincerest friendship the heart cannot pour forth.

*An.* I will relieve your majesty that pain. Sire, I know them all.

*Gust.* Heaven and hell ! you know—— What know you, Ankarstrom ? Speak, speak, my friend—you are my friend, dear Ankarstrom, are you not ?

*An.* In life and death, your majesty.

*Gust.* Then say what know you that concerns my peace.

*An.* I know that, spite of all your majesty's paternal patriotic love towards the brave people who boast you for their father, there are malignant spirits envy you even the glory springing from your virtues ; that they conspire against you ; that, stimulated by a fiend-like malice, they even seek your life.

*Gust.* How ! is it only that ? then I breathe again.

*An.* The very individuals who contemplate this sacrilegious crime are known to me.

*Gust. (aside)* I thank my Maker that you know no more.

*An.* I could proclaim them now——

*Gust.* Peace—do not breathe a sound.

*An.* Sire, is it not my duty ?

*Gust.* If you did speak, it would be mine to punish. Spare me that pain, dear Count.

*An.* And leave the base projectors of the crime to meditate in impunity the measures to accomplish it?

*Gust.* Apprise them that I know their rash designs—that will deter their execution.

*An.* 'Twould but redouble their audacity.

*Gust.* I could not live, dear Count, in constant terror of the assassin's blow—'tis to die each hour. No; I dismiss—I trample on the thought. It asks more courage, Count, than most men own, to drain the life-blood of their King—their father.

*Enter OSCAR, L. H.*

*Osc.* So please your majesty, the Grand Intendant of the Spectacles awaits your majesty's commands.

*Gust.* Aye, 'tis the very hour myself appointed for the rehearsal of my opera, "*Gustavus Vasa*." I'll not delay it.— [*Armfeldt appears with papers for the King to sign.*] Now, my lord Justice—new decrees to sign? (*He sits down, looks over two or three of the papers, which he signs, but stops at the fourth*) But how is this? a decree of exile against a woman! what crime—what danger calls for so severe a measure?

*Arm.* She is an impostor—a deluder, who professes to tell fortunes and deliver prophecies—her name is Arvedson.

*Osc.* Arvedson! oh, my lord, could you be so cruel as to banish Arvedson? why you would drive to despair all the court and fashion of Stockholm—she numbers all amongst her devotees.

*Arm.* I know she is much sought by persons of all ranks. But I have good reason to suspect that her necromancy is not confined to those harmless predictions, which can but delude the simple. Her abode is the private resort of factious plotters and suspicious characters. I have resolved upon the banishment of Arvedson.

*Osc.* Against which I beg leave to protest.

*Arm.* Justice requires her departure.

*Osc.* Mercy permits her to remain.

*Gust.* I confess the alternative is somewhat embarrassing. I would not impugn the justice of your suspicions, my good Count Armfeldt, but as yet it only is suspicion, and on suspicion only I am reluctant to condemn. An idea occurs to me that shall disperse our doubts. Suppose we visit this fair prophetess—each in disguise—our own observation will then enable us to decide how far she is an object of jealousy.

*Osc.* Oh, that is indeed a charming idea!

*Gust.* For my part, I consider it the duty of a King to survey, as far as possible, all classes of society with his own eye.

*Deh.* (*aside to Voralberg.*) May not this adventure furnish the propitious moment?

*An.* (*to Gustavus*) Surely your majesty will never prosecute this rash design—prudence forbids it.

*Gust.* I admire prudence, my good lord, but she must not reign in solitary supremacy; her empire must extinguish neither enterprize nor mirth.

*Deh.* My good Lord Ankarstrom is ever remarkable for caution.

*An.* Ever, where the safety of my sovereign is at stake; ever where he is surrounded by spies and traitors, whose arts it will be my glory, as it is my constant effort, to defeat and overthrow.

*Gust.* That our disguises may not be detected, it will be best that we repair separately to the sybil's haunt. Oscar, you will take care of mine—I care not what it is.

*Vor.* Let it not be degrading.

*Gust.* I cannot think, my lord, anything degrading to a king which is intended for the benefit of his empire, and to promote the happiness of his people. For the present, my lords and gentlemen, adieu. Anon we meet at Arvedson's. I shall expect all who love me to give me greeting there.

*Osc.* Ah, sire, then you may expect the whole of Sweden!

[*Gustavus and Oscar retire by R. H. D.—the rest L. H.—Ankarstrom first approaches Gustavus, who affectionately squeezes his hand—Ankarstrom, as he goes out, expressing the distrust with which he will watch the Conspirators.*

SCENE II.—*The Interior of the House of Arvedson. The back is formed principally of a large window, giving a view of the Port of Stockholm. On the R. H. side a fire-place, with a cauldron suspended over a fire, which burns on the hearth. On the L. H. side a private door—a door in the back, near the window. On an elevation of three steps is seen a large book open, with mystic characters.*

[*Enter ARVEDSON, L. H.*

*Arv.* I must prepare my spells—must practice incantations—must invoke the evil spirits. I need no spirits but my own; my spells are such as strong minds always practice over weak

—my incantations, those with which bright intellect can ever delude the undiscerning multitude. How prone are mankind to revere a power which their own imbecility creates—which one gleam of reason in themselves would in a glance disperse. (*Knocking at the door.*) I need not seek them nor their paltry gold ; I but erect my altar, poor and unseemly as it is, in crowds they rush there to depose their tribute. (*Cries without, "Open, open! we would learn the decrees of fate!"*) Idiots ! it is your fate to bend to my decrees. (*She opens the door, various Male and Female Peasants enter.*)

*Peas.* Now, mother, now dispense your information, we are all ready to pay ; and those to whom you promise the best fortunes, can afford you the handsomest dividend.

*Arr.* Back, clamorous hinds ! dare not to dictate to the minister of fate. The spell not yet is formed.

*Pea.* Oh, an't it? Well I dare say you know all about spelling a good deal better than I do, so out with your dictionary and begin.

*Arr.* (*scattering herbs in the cauldron, and waving over it her wand.*)

“ Spirits, who own my mortal power,  
Approach—attend the appointed hour ;  
Now calls upon your service bound,  
Now hear my voice and mark its sound.  
'Tis your's in silence to impart,  
The secret myst'ries of each heart ;  
And of the future, like a dream,  
To give me a far searching gleam.  
The fate of cottage and of throne,  
Must by your means to me be known.”

[*She throws some powder in the cauldron, a thick mist arises—the Peasantry approach her.*]

*Pea.* Here, mistress, it's my turn first. Tell me a merry tale—the money's ready.

[*CHRISTIAN now rolls in from the back, thrusting through the crowd, followed by GUSTAVUS, habited as a sailor.*]

*Chr.* Avast ! avast here ! make way for a first-rate ! I have the honour to serve his majesty—I'm one of the King's sailors. I want to know what fortune has got in store for me ; for, like the King, she's damnably in my debt. I have served his majesty these eighteen years, and, except my prog, have had nothing for my pains.

*Arr.* Nothing ?

*Chr.* But three thumping wounds. One that queered my



larboard timber here, another that you see has a little damaged my figure-head. Oh! smite my taffrail, if you can fancy what a handsome fellow I was once—and another, it lodged—delicacy forbids me to explain the particulars, bnt, howsomdever, it played hell with my starnpost. Now, I'd just like you to tell me, ma'am, whether I'm ever likely to make up any of this leeway!

*Arv.* Show me your hand.

*Chr.* What! you want me to tip my grappler? well, if I'd a known that ere, slip my cable if I wouldn't ha' troubled the bo'sen for a grip of his soap. However, there it is—it has grasped many a tough rope, and more than that, many a stout cutlass in defence of my king and country.

*Gust.* That's a brave fellow, and I am his debtor.

*Arv.* (*having looked at his hand*) If your king has been unjust to you——

*Chr.* Avast there, ma'am! I never said that ere. Lord love his noble majesty! I should never think he owed me nothing, if I gave my life for him, for it is what every honest subject is bound to surrender to the protector of his country.

*Arv.* The King knows well how much he is indebted to the valour of his seamen. He will reward you—you shall roll in wealth.

*Chr.* No, shall I though? Then start my timbers, if my Pauline does not cut the biggest swell of all Stockholm Quay! My eyes, what a jolly pennant she shall carry flying from her mainmast!

*Arv.* And you shall have a noble rank.

*Chr.* A rank! what do you mean by a rank—you don't mean that I'm to march in the rank along o' them ere swaddies? because I'm damned if I do, you know—if your pal, old Belzebub, were to give the word of command.

*Arv.* I mean the rank of naval officer.

*Chr.* Naval officer! what, an officer aboard a ship—to walk the quarter-deck? You don't mean that, do you? Oh, split my mainsail! me to swell about the quarter deck, and perhaps to take a king's ship into action! Lord love your eyes! I must have a buss for that, if you were the ugliest witch in Christendom. (*Kisses her*) Well, you know, I'll tip up jolly for that—if it's only the hope of it. [*During this dialogue, Gustavus has drawn a rouleau from his pocket, written a few words on it with his pencil, and slid it into Christian's jacket pocket.*] Now for it, if it's the last shot I've got in the locker. (*Searching in his pocket, he draws forth the rouleau.*) Why, what the devil's

this? Nothing contraband in my cargo I know; what can it mean? (*reads*) "The King, Gustavus, to his friend and comrade, Christian, commander of the brig Gustavus Vasa." What! this mine? all these yellow-boys, and from the King? Oh, stove my bows in, if my Pauline an't jolly well rigged out of this;—and me a officer! command a brig! Turn me keel upwards, if I an't fit to go ont of my wits with joy! Only let me, with the Gustavus Vasa, once get within gun shot of the enemy, and then see whether any navy in the world can boast a better sailor than honest Christian. Damn it, old girl, but we must have another salute for that, for you're the most regular trump of a fortune-blabb'er that ever I met with, smash my bulwarks! [*He again embraces Arvedson, to the great amusement of the bystanders, especially Gustavus. A knocking is then heard at the private door.*]

*Arv.* Hence, vile herd! depart, for often by this secret passage the first grandees of Sweden apply to know the secrets of their fate. [*She opens the secret door—enter a Valet of Ankarstrom.*]

*Gust.* How now! the livery of Ankarstrom!

*Val.* My mistress now approaches, and would alone consult you.

*Gust.* Heaven? the lovely countess!

*Val.* She is now at hand.

*Arv.* I shall await her, and will have care no curious impertinent shall watch her footsteps. [*Exit Valet, L. H.*]

*Gust.* Dear, dear Amelia! tender, credulous, and yet well meaning. She dares not trust the feelings of her heart, and fain would seek by supernatural means the strength she knows dwells not within herself.

*Arv.* Now leave me all. The gift, the hour, have passed; at midnight those who would consult my power have leave again to seek me. [*Exeunt Peasants, R. H.*]

[*She goes to the door in the back and lets them all out. Gustavus has found means to pass behind her, and secrets himself in the chamber—the Countess Ankarstrom enters by the private door; alarmed and agitated, she looks around her, then sinks into a chair, meantime Arvedson has closed the door.*]

*Arv.* Lady, be tranquil and composed; inform me for what purpose you are here?

*Amel.* Nay, if your art's so great as 'tis reported, you need not seek the intelligence of me.

*Arv.* One less skilled than I might read it in those wildly



gleaming eyes, that heaving breast, that palpitating heart—'tis love that agitates your bosom.

*Amel.* You know it, then ?

*Arv.* Beyond a shade of doubt.

*Gust.* (*aside—peeping from his concealment.*) She loves ! ah, let me learn the rest.

*Amel.* Then, too, you know it is unholy love—unsanctioned of mankind, and cursed by heaven ; a love against which my soul in vain would struggle—it is too-powerful, it bends my heart.

*Gust.* (*aside*) Oh ! transport to my soul ; it is her king she loves.

*Amel.* It is a passion bows me to the grave. Never, oh ! never shall my honour yield ! no, though my anguished heart burst in the conflict. From you—from you I seek aid. Oh ! does your fatal art include one spell by which I may escape this dreadful struggle, by which I may preserve my faith and honour ?

*Arv.* I know a drink of magic power, by which this maddening influence may be controlled.

*Amel.* Ah ! then, at price of all my worldly wealth. (*giving her a purse.*) This—this, and ten times more.

*Arv.* But to procure it, will require courage.

*Amel.* Be sure, I shall not want it.

*Arv.* Without the city walls, a dark secluded spot, by men avoided, dreaded, and abhorred, surrounded by a black and barren rock, sustains the fearful instrument of death to criminals devoted. There their mangled forms, in iron frames supported, creak in the midnight blast as though still uttering the shrieks of lengthened torment. There you must repair alone—alone at midnight ! this very night you must. Ha ! you turn pale ! I say, this very night.

*Amel.* Yes, yes, I will have courage. I will brave all—all rather than bear this torment.

*Arv.* Upon that rock there grows a herb with wondrous powers endowed—there, and there only ; and as you pluck it forth, shrink not to hear an awful deep-heaved groan, as though the sterile rock felt agony in yielding the only treasure it can boast.

*Amel.* I will endure it all ; honour and duty call, and I will obey.

*Gust.* (*aside*) And there, by my crown—my faith ! I swear to follow, to watch, and protect you !

*Voices.* (*without*) Open, witch of Eblis, for we will wait no longer.

*Arv.* Hence, hence, and mind my bidding. Bring me the precious herb, all shall be well.

*Amel.* Oh, yes! I will, I will—no terror shall deter me from the means that may console and purify this wretched, wretched heart. (*She is conducted by Arvedson to the secret door, and exit K. H. Gustavus has intently watched them—Arvedson now opens the front door, and the Courtiers and Conspirators, variously disguised as Citizens, enter, including Dehorn, Voralberg, and Oscar. Gustavus comes from his concealment and mingles with them.*)

*Deh.* Now, daughter of Belzebub, prepare to disclose to us the secrets of futurity.

*Osc.* The King not yet arrived! (*looking round.*) Ah! this is he, disguised as a sailor.

*Gust.* Hush! not a word. Come, venerable sybil, disclose me now, sailor as I am, what is my fate in love—shall it be blest? What shall become my fortune—shall my vessel make happily her port?

*Arv.* Proud, giddy mortals, who dare insult the power from which you seek to learn your doom. 'Tis well to treat your fate's interpreter with levity—consult her knowledge, and, perhaps another feeling shall pervade your hearts.

*Gust.* Who tempts the ordeal?—what, reluctant?—Then I will. Resolve me, now, what is my state and calling?

*Arv.* (*looking at his hand.*) If I mistake not, this is a warrior hand, to whom the sword is not a stranger.

*Osc.* So far she is true, at any rate.

*Gust.* Proceed.

*Arv.* Ask me no further.

*Gust.* And why not?

*Arv.* Your fate——

*Gust.* Wer't that of demons, I'd shrink not to hear it.

*Arv.* You are about to die.

*Gust.* If in the field of honour, I hail that fate with rapture.

*Arv.* A happiness that is denied you. By the assassin's hand 'tis yours to fall.

*All.* Ah!

*Arv.* And why do you, who now surround him, tremble at this announcement more than he?

*Osc.* Because our loss were greater.

*Gust.* Finish thy prophecy, it cannot daunt my soul. Know you the hand that shall attempt my life?

*Ard.* The very first that you shall grasp this day.

*Gust.* Well, well, friends—'tis a joke, and we will enjoy it;

who will refuse my hand?—come, give this canting oracle the lie. [*He offers his hand—all decline. At this moment, the door opens, and Ankarstrom enters.*] Ah! arrived at last. What has retarded you? [*Takes his hand, and all start back in amazement.*]

*All.* Count Ankarstrom!

*Deh.* I breathe again.

*Vor.* And I bless my propitious fortune.

*Osc.* Well, I think if ever the propheticess made a false calculation, she is in a mistake this time, at all events.

*Gust.* Yes—now I am sure I press the hand of a sincere friend;

*An.* Your majesty so honours me.

*Arv.* How!—the King!

*Gust.* And could your art not tell you?—besides that, I dare say it failed to apprize you that the Lord Chief Justice intends to banish you.

*Arv.* Me sive?

*Gust.* Be not alarmed, for I've already pardoned you—and more, take this. [*presents a purse.*]

*Arv.* Generous King! my gratitude dictates no better service than to repeat my warning. (*looking at Ankarstrom.*) One of them will betray you.

*Deh. and Vor.* How!

*Arv.* (*looking at them.*) Perhaps more than one.

*Gust.* Always these vile suspicions!—but no matter; Gustavus shall not tell it to the King.

*An.* My lords, let us escort his majesty's return; see that no idle rabble throng the footway. [*Exeunt all but Gustavus, Oscar, Arvedson, and Conspirators.*]

*Vor.* When can fate offer a more tempting opportunity—now et the blow be struck.

*Deh.* Disguised, defenceless, never can it fall more safely to ourselves.

[*Oscar is throwing a mantle round Gustavus's shoulders—Dehorn and Voralberg are approaching him, their hands upon their daggers, the others follow—they are about to strike, when a shout is heard from without—the door is thrust open—Christian rushes in, followed by the People, and throws himself at Gustavus's feet.*]

*Chr.* It is himself, messmates—it is, indeed, the King!

[*All kneel to him—Ankarstrom has entered.*]

*Gust.* (*To Ankarstrom and Arvedson.*) You would counsel me to shield myself with caution and suspicion. There, there

is the only safeguard of a monarch, his own integrity—his people's love! That is a rampart the assassin's steel can never penetrate! [General Shout.—Picture.]

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

CENE I.—*A wild desolate rocky Glen, surrounded on all sides by rocky eminences, partially covered with firs, yews, and wintry trees. In the back are seen two rude pillars of stone, united at the top by bars of iron—this is the instrument of execution. Through a chasm of the rocks, is seen a distant view of Stockholm and its lights. The whole Scene is illuminated by the Moon. As the Curtain rises, a distant bell is heard to strike midnight. AMELIA enveloped in a cloak and veil, appears upon the rock—she looks cautiously and timidly about her—she advances, almost overcome with terror and agitation—she perceives the gallows, her horror is augmented, and she sinks upon a rocky bank.*

*Amel.* Powers of mercy! now sustain me, or my strength of mind and body yield at once! All here inspires terror; this frightful scene of crime and punishment, amidst which fancy pictures the mingling shadows of the victims—of those who fell beneath the assassin's steel, and those who expiated here the guilt of blood. If I remember right, 'twas here, amidst these rocks that she bade me seek the precious balm that shall expel the poison from my heart—renew my innocence—restore my peace. Oh! let me snatch it quickly; for the fell weakness that now saps my virtue, even now inspires dread of that I should so much desire. Gustavus, I must tear thee from my heart; but, ah! I feel 'tis not without a pang!

[*She passes onward between the pillars, and is about to ascend the rock, when she is met by GUSTAVUS—she utters a shriek, and would run back, but he presses her hand.*]

*Gust.* Amelia, calm your fears; it is your king who comes to watch over and protect you.

*Amel.* Ah! it is from you I would seek refuge—from you that I would be protected, or rather from myself.

*Gust.* Yes—and from the fiends of hell you ask the power to hate me—I whose heart and soul are all your own.

*Amel.* I have betrayed myself—he knows my weakness—I dare not meet his eye.

*Gust.* Be sure, Amelia, the deep love I bear you, surrounds you with a halo of respect; but if I am so blessed as in that gentle bosom to inspire one thrill of tenderness——

*Amel.* Ah, sire! forbear, and pity me. I am the wife of him you call your friend.

*Gust.* Name him not, Amelia, or you drive me mad.

*Amel.* Of him, who for his sovereign and his friend, would gladly sacrifice his heart's best blood!

*Gust.* I know. I feel my crime—view it in all its complicated baseness, and shudder at its horror. I struggle with the demon—I strive to pluck him from my burning heart; but reason, friendship, virtue, all are weak, and sink powerless before the madness of my love! Amelia, every tie of honour, bids me avoid—but, ah! I feel I cannot live without you.

*Amel.* (*struggling to break away from him.*) Ah, sire! mercy? mercy!—let me fly. (*aside.*) My heart is breaking in this dreadful conflict——

*Gust.* Amelia, at your word I quit my state and sovereignty! the people I have loved; the country I have bled for; the glory which from my boyhood was my cherished dream—all, all renounced, Amelia, for you.

*Amel.* What shall protect me—what shall save me now?—Ah, sire! in you alone I will confide. I do confess my love, but, oh!—be noble—generous—like a king, and save me from myself.

*Gust.* Ah, let this warm embrace bespeak how powerless I am to do your bidding, that Gustavus, who never shrank from mortal foe, cannot become the conqueror of himself. (*he is about to embrace her—she retreats from him—her ear catches distant sounds.*)

*Amel.* Hark, sire! steps approach.

*Gust.* With eager speed, some one directs his course along the rocky path. Heavens! 'tis Ankarstrom.

*Amel.* My husband! (*drops her veil.*)

*Enter ANKARSTROM, L. H.*

*An.* How, sire!—and is it thus I find you? A rendezvous of amorous dalliance! and for such pastime you can risk a life so dear to Sweden? I heard you had alone quitted the city—that your steps were directed to this spot.

*Gust.* Why am I watched, and dogged thus, like a child?

*An.* Hatred is watchful, sire, as well as friendship. You have been traced and followed; and thirsty blades, now gleaming in the moonlight, seek you in every cavernous recess.

*Amel.* Ah! all my blood is curdling at the thought!

*An.* Shrouded beneath this mantle, they have taken me for one of their vile band. I have passed through the midst of them—I overheard them say, “when he conducts the amorous fair one hence, we’ll sluice his heated veins——”

*Amel.* I shall expire with terror.

*Gust.* For heaven’s sake, madam, calm this dire alarm.

*An.* There is a passage this way, through the rock, by which you may avoid them; or otherwise, in this disguise like me, you shall pass harmless ’midst the assassins.

[*Throws the cloak over him.*]

*Amel.* (to *Gust.*) In heaven’s name, retire——

*Gust.* Indeed ’tis needful—I will conduct your steps.

*An.* Not so; they know a female is in your company—the sight of her at once would guide their daggers to your heart.

*Amel.* (aside to *Gust.*) Yes, yes—he’s right—away—away! alone.

*Gust.* And abandon thee?—not for a thousand lives!

*Amel.* Ah, I implore you——

*An.* Haste, haste, sire!—they’re at hand.

*Gust.* Then here I stand to brave them. (to *Amelia.*) To die at thy dear feet, is happiness as great as I can ask.

*Amel.* (To *Gustavus*, taking him a little aside.) If you scorn apprehension for yourself, yet have some care for me, for here I swear, unless you instantly depart, I snatch concealment from my guilty brow, and stand revealed before him.

*Gust.* Eternal heaven! you cannot—dare not——

*Amel.* Would you see me fall his victim, here, before your face?

*Gust.* (For a moment hesitates—then solemnly approaches *Ankarstrom*.) *Ankarstrom*, hear me. I know your love for me, your truth, your honour,—how sacred to you is your plighted word——

*An.* Else were I fit to be *Gustavus*’ friend?

*Gust.* Then plight that word to me, to see her safe within the walls of Stockholm.

*An.* With cheerfulness I promise it.

*Gust.* Speak not to her—look not towards—do not strive to hear her voice, or guess, even, at her features.

*An.* This, sire, I promise on my sacred word.

*Gust.* And on your faith, implicit I rely.

*An.* Hence, hence, sire, hence. [*the footsteps have approached. Gustavus squeezes the hand of Ankarstrom, and that of Amelia, then hastily departs—Amelia with intense anxiety gazing*]



*after him; whilst Ankarstrom is watching on the other side for the approach of the Conspirators. He then returns towards Amelia.*

*An.* Let us hasten, madam, to quit this dreary spot; unto the walls of Stockholm, I am your sworn protector.

*Amel.* I scarcely dare approach him.

*An.* Come, madam; do you shrink in terror from the man whose solemn honour's pledged to guard your virtue? Think you there are none to whom their vows are sacred?

*Amel.* Ah, how his words cut keenly to my heart—how bitterly their venom rankles there,

*An.* Be sure, fair lady, that the faith of Ankarstrom was never forfeit yet, to man or woman.

*Amel.* I must away. Oh, may this friendly veil at least conceal the torments that are preying on my bosom. [*She gives him her hand; as they turn round to depart, they perceive the avenue in the back closed up by the Conspirators, who have cautiously approached.*] Heavens! they are here!

*Deh.* Yes—in this hour of silence, and this scene of desolation, he is our easy prey.

*Vor.* That must be he. We heard a female lured him to this spot; her veil gleams yonder, in the moonlight.

*Deh.* Now hangs the fate of Sweden on a blow! [*Ankarstrom has meantime with difficulty led Amelia from the R. H. to the L. H. where they are now met and surrounded by the Conspirators, who have stolen down from the back.*] Strike, comrade, strike!

*An.* Who dare say strike, upon an unarmed man—a trembling woman?

*Deh.* Heavens! 'tis not the King!

*An.* He is no longer here.

*Vor. (and the rest.)* 'Tis Ankarstrom!

*An.* Yes, my lords, Ankarstrom, who can as easily name you—I know you all. Now speak, Dehorn—speak you, Count Voralberg—what would you with the King? You answer not; proclaim your object here.

*Deh.* Perhaps like your own—(*pointing to Amelia.*) to seek the joys of love

*Vor.* But you have been more fortunate than we—your mistress keeps her word with you, and ours have failed us.

*Deh.* At least, in compassion for our disappointment, your lady fair will deign to favour us with one glance upon her charms. [*Two of them advance with torches, which they have lighted—Ankarstrom snatches a sword from the sheath of one*

who stands near him, and placing Amelia a little behind him, stands in an attitude of defence.]

An. The first that dares advance one footstep nearer, perishes on the spot.

Deh. Don't fancy, friend, that menaces deter me; 'faith they rather pique my eager curiosity. And for one glance upon your beauty, there I am determined. [*He goes behind to seize Amelia; the rest of the Conspirators advance with drawn swords upon Ankarstrom.*]

An. Back! or by hell, it costs the blood of some. [*They rush towards him—Amelia bursts from Dehorn, and throws her arms round the neck of Ankarstrom.*]

Amel. No, no—you shall not kill him! [*The veil has fallen from her—the light of the torches gleams upon her countenance—as she recovering to all the horrors of her situation, stands transfixed.*]

Vor. The Countess!

Deh. His wife!

An. Amelia!

Deh. (*after a moment's pause.*) Well, upon my soul, this is excellent—that a gentleman who has a very comfortable home, should come out here at midnight, to court his wife amongst the snowy mountains.

An. (*Aside, and abstractedly, as if recovering from a dream.*) I was yielding up my life to save him; and he that sought to rob me of my honor. Oh! what a Hell has kindled in my heart!—

Amel. Why opens not the earth to swallow me? Can I endure this complicated horror!

An. Life—life—a poor atonement for a wrong like mine.

Deh. 'Twere well for us, comrades, to quit this spot; we may, perhaps, else be apprehended by some prowling night-guard.

Vor. What need we fear?—here is the King's chief favourite and friend, to give us his protection.

An. By Hell, I am his deadliest foe! Count Voralberg, at your house or at mine, to-morrow, I must speak with you.

Vor. I shall attend you, sir. You, perhaps, would ask account of our too eager curiosity.

An. No matter what I ask—you will be there

Vor. I will.

An. Name the time.

Vor. At seven o'clock.

An. Come both of you.



*Vor.* Will not the one suffice ?

*An.* No ; i would speak with both—and shall expect you.

*Deh.* I will be there.

*An.* Enough ! and now good night. (*Turning with irony to Amelia, who has remained for some moments with her face buried in her hands* ) You have forgotten, madam, 'tis my duty to see you safely to the walls of Stockholm.

*Amel.* Support me, powers of mercy ! (*She presents her hand to Ankarstrom, and in a supplicating tone utters, " My lord ! "*)

*An.* Silence ! I would not hear your prayers, nor see your tears—your life is forfeited ! [*He drags her to the back, through the Conspirators, who gaze with interest, the light of the torches falling on them—Amelia is scarcely able to support herself ; as they reach the back, the scene closes.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Mansion of Count Ankarstrom. Door in the back—two side doors.*

*Enter OSCAR, L. H.*

*Osc.* Well, I have gained access to the countess's apartment as sily as any page, if he had been brought up at court a thousand years, could do—with a very, very pretty message from my sovereign lord. Oh ! she is a sweet dear pretty lady, the Countess Ankarstrom ; and I do really think that if I were a man instead of a boy—(and I shall be, pretty soon) I'd soone kiss the hand of that fair lady, than the lips of most of the pert misses about the court. But, then, her husband—Oh, lawk-a-daisy me ! what an awful consideration that is, when fair lady has got a husband who grudges one so much as even look at her. And they do say, that a husband has an absolute right—that no one ought even to glance kindly at a married lady. Well, I don't know how it is, I think I have as much disposition to do what is right as any body, and yet when a dear, kind, lovely lady darts from her swimming overflowing eyes a gleam of tenderness that pierces to the heart, I do so feel all over in a kind of a sort of a quiveration like. I see how it is, I must learn who all the married ladies at court are ; I won't permit myself so much as to look at them, but must content myself with all the impertinences of the spinster minxes. Ha ! I hear a tumult on the private staircase ; yes, 'tis the count himself. Faith, little Oscar, if thou hast any feeling for the

safety, I would not have thee let him find thee here.

[*Exit R. H.*

[*Immediately afterwards the door in the back is thrust open—enter COUNT ANKARSTROM, dragging Amelia; he shuts and locks the door, and lays his sword upon the table.*]

*An.* I think the moisture of a woman's eye can glide, as swift and straightway to my heart, as that of any man who ever professed to love them; but against the traitor tear of an adulteress, 'tis as the pierceless adamant.

*Amel.* 'Tis in compassion to yourself, my lord, and not in selfish fear, I would implore you hear me.

*An.* Well then, betrayer, now confess thy crime, it may conciliate mercy.

*Amel.* I may have been the victim of a dark fatality, but for your honour, like my own, 'tis sacred.

*An.* Whence then thy trembling agitation—whence a tremor which nought but guilt could strike unto the soul?

*Amel.* I will confess; I loved him! but to degrade myself—dishonour you. No, my lord, no; though years of painful slavery my fate demanded, I have a soul would scorn a breach of faith, would rather pine and perish in a hopeless passion.

*An.* A passion! passion for another! and to my ears thou dar'st reveal the frightful truth that deep must cleave my heart? This is a tenfold treason, and thy life shall this instant pay the forfeit! (*draws his sword.*)

*Amel.* (*sinking on her knees*) I do not ask my life—it is a gift from which each charm and joy, each hope's departed! but, sir, I have a child—ere I depart, I would upon his infant head implore a blessing; I would upon his blooming cheeks rain down the latest tears of his heart-broken mother.

*An.* Oh! how that voice still creeps over my soul with spell-like influence and bends my sternest purpose to its wishes. Have thy wish, woman—thou shalt see thy child.

*Amel.* Oh, Heaven ever bless you! Never was your heart yet deaf to poor Amelia's prayer.

*An.* (*aside*) Why should I crush her feebleness? Oh! no, it is a nobler victim my revenge requires. Quick, dry thy tears, my lady; quick! some one comes, I say. I would not have them see you weep; I would not here expose your shame or mine. (*On a peremptory sign from him, she goes out, R. H.*)

[*Ankarstrom opens the centre doors—enter DEHORN and VORALBERG; he then re-closes the doors. and motions them to be seated on chairs, then takes one himself.*

*An.* Gentlemen, I asked your presence here—not for a trivial purpose—not for a futile explanation of our last night's meeting—far different cares now occupy my soul. I know you are conspirators——

*Deh. and Vor.* Conspirators?

*An.* (*grasping each of their hands*) Conspirators against your sovereign lord—against his life, and you are sworn to slay him.

*Deh.* Who, count, has told you this?

*An.* The proof is here before me; here, here, upon this table.

*Vor.* And having thus discovered us, you are about to sell us to your master.

*An.* Liar! I have no master; but I am disposed to be your comrade—to share your projects, and perchance may have the power to direct, nearer than any of you, the avenging steel to yon fell tyrant's heart.

*Deh.* And you think us, sir, the so easy dupes of this poor artifice?

*An.* I know that you suspect me, sirs, and 'tis not without good reason. I'll make no oaths, I scorn all protestations. I have a son—an infant, angel, darling son—and till our ends are accomplished, I yield him hostage for my firm fidelity. You marvel at my rancour—there is a cause, an injury, dishonour—I will not name it now. I'll have his life! I swear to have his life, and either by your aid or else without it: even as you will, my lords.

*Deh.* The terms you mention, and the zeal you do evince sufficiently assure us you are Gustavus's foe.

*An.* I have but one condition to propose.

*Vor.* Name it, then—name it.

*An.* 'Tis, that this arm may strike the tyrant's heart.

*Deh.* There are too many, count, eager to dispute with you that dangerous honour, for it at once to be conceded.

*Vor.* Perhaps, if fortune should decide the claim and name the hero fated to the deed——

*An.* Aye, be it so; for I can ask no more in this world, or the next, than fate decrees me.

*Deh.* I will prepare the papers needful for the purpose. [*He sits at a table and writes—Voralberg takes a vase from a bracket and brings it to him. Ankarstrom is agitatedly pacing the apartment—AMELIA enters by the R. H. door.*]

*An.* Who, madam, sent for you? what brings you here?

*Amel.* I crave your pardon for the interruption, count, but the king's page is earnestly inquiring for you.

*An.* The king's page? Let him wait; and you——do you

remain. 'Tis Heaven's justice guides you to this spot, and not without a purpose. (*aside*) Yes, let the guilty be herself the arbitress and name the man who shall avenge the crime of which she was partaker. (*Aside to the Conspirators*) Mind her not, lords, she does not dream our purpose; but, for a fantasy of mine, let her draw forth the papers. (*They nod consent—Ankarstrom presents her with the vase, into which the written papers have been dropped.*) Now, madam, choose; at hazard draw forth from the vase one of those written papers.

*Amel.* My lord, with what intention?

*An.* Ask not my purpose, but obey my will.

*Amel.* You do command, my lord; I will not disobey you, and yet what trembling speaks unto my heart, that even in this I do a deed of horror. (*With a trembling and reluctant step she approaches the vase, and there pauses.*)

*An.* Now, madam, choose; I think you heard me, countess? (*In an agony of terror she draws a paper from the vase—Ankarstrom snatches it from her and hands it to Dehorn.*) Read it, my good lord—read it.

*Deh.* (*reads the paper*) Ankarstrom!

*An.* (*with a burst of exultation*) At length Heaven does me justice; 'twas a reparation that it owed me.

*Amel.* (*aside*) Ah! what a thought of horror strikes into my heart!

*Deh. and Vor.* Perish the tyrant quickly!

*An.* The work shall not grow cold within my hands.

*Amel.* (*aside, but with a burst of horror*) The monsters would destroy their patriot king. (*Rushes to Ankarstrom*) My dear, dear lord—

*An.* (*coldly*) Well, and what would you, madam?

*Amel.* (*shrinking back in terror*) Nothing, my dear lord—nothing. (*aside*) How to preserve my sovereign from the snare and not betray my husband?

*Enter OSCAR, R. H.*

*Osc.* At length, most lovely countess, I have found you, and bring a gallant message from our sovereign.

*An.* (*aside*) That petty reptile's venom irritates my fury.

*Osc.* He hopes the splendour of the coming ball shall be irradiated, if not eclipsed, by your transcendant beauty, and hopes your noble husband will not shrink from his much-envied post as the protector of such brilliant charms.

*Amel.* My humblest duty to our sovereign lord, but I cannot, shall not be there.

*Osc.* How, lady! you not there? I'm sure the King will never take that message at my hands. The King to give a masquerade and you not there!

*An.* Are you quite sure of that, sir? Is it a masquerade? *Looking significantly at his accomplices.*

*Osc.* So are the tickets and the orders given. I have prepared my dress; oh, such a lovely dress! I'm sure if some lady does not fall in love with me that night, I'll give it up as a hopeless case for ever.

*An.* *(to Dehorn and Voralberg)* Thus will the tyrant throw himself within our grasp. *(to Oscar)* The countess and myself will have the honour of attending, page, upon your master's bidding.

*Amel.* You cannot mean it, my most honoured lord?

*An.* It is my firm intepion, lady fair. Page, you'll so tell your master.

*Osc.* At which I'm sure he'll be delighted, as well as I.

*An.* He will be there himself?

*Osc.* There don't exist a doubt of it. Oh, it will be a charming festival. *(aside to Amelia)* And I am confident no circumstance will so add to its delight to me, and many others, as the presence of the Countess Ankarstrom.

*Amel.* Oh! how shall I sustain these hideous dreams of treachery and blood? how warn him of the fate that threatens him?

*Osc.* Should you for a moment lack a servitor, fair lady, remember the poor boy, that never will fail to keep his eyes on you. *[Exit L. H.]*

*Amel.* Perhaps by means of Arvedson—yes, yes, that must be tried. No means unsought to save him!

*An.* *(to Dehorn and Voralberg)* We meet, then, in the hall of masquerade.

*Deh.* For signal of unfailing recognition?

*An.* A white ribbon worn on the right arm.

*Vor.* What for the word?

*An.* Sweden and liberty!

*Deh. and Vor.* Enough! enough!

*[He makes a peremptory sign to Amelia to retire L. H., which she does, casting looks of imploring agony towards him; Oscar retires R. H., after having seen Amelia off—Ankarstrom returns to conduct Dehorn and Voralberg; when they reach the centre door, they renew their oath, and the curtain falls.]*

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Gallery in the Palace adjoining the Ball Room.**Enter GUSTAVUS, L. H.*

*Gust.* Heaven, then, has favoured our design, and she regained her husband's palace without our fatal secret being suspected. But this must no longer continue. Gustavus must no longer remain involved in an unequal struggle between his passions and his sense of right. No—a decisive victory must procure for him a peace, at least within himself. I will not yield in such a contest, where friendship, honour, virtue, must be alike trod under foot. I will see Amelia no more. Ankarstrom is appointed to the Government of Finland, and to-morrow they shall both depart. It is no easy sacrifice I make; 'tis not without a pang that I can tear from me the image of that lovely form—the first, the only one that made me feel what is the love inspired in man by woman. Even now she is at hand—in yonder hall that form of symmetry glides in a very atmosphere of elegance and grace along the mazy movements of the dance. I dare not trust myself again to gaze on her. No, no; I am determined—I will not be present at the ball.

*Enter OSCAR, L. H.*

*Osc.* Sire, at the palace gate an unknown female, her form concealed within a spacious mantle, charged me, without an instant of delay, to hand to you this billet—alone, she said, and in secret.

*Gust.* (*takes the note, and reads*) Once more I'm warned against this masquerade, assured that an attempt will be made against my life. And shall the King of Sweden yield to childish fears like these? expose himself to all the ridicule of a censorious world, and have it said he feared to show himself amidst his people. To an address like this there can be but one answer.

*Gsc.* What is your majesty's pleasure?

*Gust.* Lead to the ball-room, boy.

[*Exeunt R. H.*]

SCENE II.—*The Grand Ball Room of the Palace. It is magnificently decorated and illuminated, and opens in the back by archways into other apartments similarly ornamented. At the opening of the Scene a numerous assemblage of both sexes, variously and fantastically dressed, are seen engaged in all the motley amusements of a Masquerade. One Mask is making love to*



a female sitting beside him; another young female is carried off by a group of Masks. One man is offering his arm to two females, who dispute with each other, and he in vain endeavours to conciliate them. In another spot two men are quarrelling and apparently making an appointment for a duel. On another side a husband is pursuing his wife, who is clinging to the arm of another mask—he stops her, and challenges her to disclose herself and unmask—she beckons to one of her friends about the same height, and whilst the two men are disputing, places her friend in her own place, and mingles with the crowd—the husband becoming peremptory, the lady unmask, he perceives his mistake, is confused, and an object of ridicule to the bystanders, amongst whom is his wife. After this A GRAND BALLET takes place, at the end of which Dehorn, Voralberg, and other Conspirators come forward. They are masked, and each has a white ribbon on his arm—they recognize each other—Ankarstrom is then seen to advance, similarly apparelled.

Deh. (To Voralberg.) Another of our confederates, punctual to his appointment. (approaching Ankarstrom, and taking his hand.) Sweden!

An. And liberty!

Vor. Have you heard aught?

An. (taking off his mask.) Yes—that the King will not attend the ball.

Deh. Cursed caprice! then are our plans defeated.

Vor. How gained you this intelligence?

An. From the King's own Chamberlain, who informed me that as he was on the point of entering to the ball, he was deterred by the delivery of an anonymous letter.

Deh. Then are we all betrayed, and shall become his victims.

Vor. Were not instant flight——

An. Mean and disgraceful—I do not give up my hopes of prey so easily. But, hush! we are observed.

Deh. By whom?

An. Observe you not this mask, who pertinaciously has watched me through the night?—I'll question him? anon we'll meet again—resolve on nothing rashly.

[The Conspirators now disperse themselves amongst the company.

An. (To Oscar, who is strictly disguised.) Still at my heels, watch-dog? (he has replaced his mask.)

Osc. And do not mean to quit them. I know you, Count!

An. Indeed!

Osc. And what have you done with your fair companion?

An. Is that a question in which you are particularly interested?

Osc. I am too cautious to confess so much to you.

An. Why so?

Osc. Because I might have to do with those, who in the field and in the cabinet, were stronger than myself.

An. I'll penetrate this mummery. (*snatches his mask.*) You, Oscar!

Osc. There, now Count, your rudeness has stopped all my little plans of intrigue. The women all know me, now.

An. And this, then, is your diversion, in the absence of the King!

Osc. His absence!—oh, indeed, I do not wait for that. We may meet him every moment.

An. How!—he is at the ball?

Osc. To be sure he is.

An. Are you quite sure of that?

Osc. I waited on him to the very door.

An. His dress?

Osc. Oh, I dare say I am going to let you into all my little secrets, and the King's, too.

An. Nay, but can you not distinguish his real friends?

Osc. Why, I believe there are very few things in the world he would wish to conceal from you. And I suppose you mean to play off some little joke on him?

An. Exactly so. [*Amelia, closely disguised in a pale domino, now approaches, and anxiously listens.*]

Osc. Why, then, you will find the King in a plain black domino, distinguished only by a cross upon his breast, of amaranth coloured ribbon. But the dance is recommencing in the next apartment—therefore I have not a single word more to say.

An. Yes, yes—one word——

Osc. Not a syllable, for I see the dance has begun.

[*He runs away to the adjacent Room. Ankarstrom perceives some more of the Conspirators, whom he eagerly addresses—then retires to the back, anxiously scrutinizing every person he passes. GUSTAVUS now slowly and pensively advances from a side Room, dressed as described by Oscar—he is attentively followed by the female in the pale domino.*]

Amel. Why, why, Gustavus, scorn the warnings of your friends—why expose a life so dear to Sweden?

Gust. 'Twas you, then, that endeavoured to deter me from the ball?

Amel. And you should have taken advantage of the caution.

Gust. None shall assume to himself the glory of having made Gustavus tremble. I hesitated as to coming, but your remark



decided me. (*Taking off his mask, at which the Domino appears terrified.*) And who are you, then, who take so deep an interest in my welfare?

*Amel.* What matter whence comes the advice, so the advice be good? (*Softly, but with great emphasis.*) Begone, sire, of your death is certain!

*Gust.* I have gazed at it closer in many a blood-stained field.

*Amel.* Never did it lower so grimly on you. Sire, they are sworn to strike!

*Gust.* Then are they perjured, for they dare not do it. At least, your name.

*Amel.* Ah, sire! I dare not breathe it—but if to yield my life could succour yours—(*She has before spoken in a voice of affected solemnity, but now relapses into her natural tone.*)

*Gust.* Ah! now I know the voice—it is Amelia! For the last time, Amelia, then, one word—

*Amel.* Ah, sire! begone—begone—Ankarstrom will be here!

*Gust.* I have resolved upon the sacrifice, Amelia, we part for ever!

*Amel.* Heavens! what do I hear?

*Gust.* 'Tis for your happiness, and both our honours. You and your husband to a distant land—both shall depart to-morrow—'tis I have signed the act that tears you from me. There take it—(*presents her with a paper.*) Now, all my wrongs to him are well atoned.

*Amel.* (*reads.*) “Ankarstrom, Governor of Finland!” Ah! then all is saved!—I fly to seek him. [*She rushes out, R. H. Ankarstrom and the Conspirators have advanced from the back on the opposite side, and are now near Gustavus.*]

*Gust.* Amelia, dear Amelia! you have received my last present.

*An.* And you now mine! [*Shoots him—Gustavus staggers, and is caught in the arms of Oscar and Officers—Soldiers suddenly fill up the avenues—all crowd towards Gustavus, except Ankarstrom, who tearing the white ribbon from his arm, would escape.*]

*Osc.* That is the traitor—do not let him pass. [*The Guard opposes him in his effort to escape—he drops the mask and pistol.*] The instrument of death is found on him.

*All.* Ankarstrom!

*All this is done in an instant, as the scream of Amelia, who now rushes in, follows very closely on the discharge of the pistol. She perceives Ankarstrom standing as the criminal, and Gustavus bleeding at his feet.*]

*Amel.* Monster of blood, you have destroyed your friend! Read there, read there! read of his lofty virtue—read your own deep damnation! (*Hands him the paper which Gustavus had given her.*)

*An.* (*in a state of distraction casts his eye over it*) “To remove for ever from my view a temptation which I feel too strong for me, and might betray me to wrong my friend, Ankarstrom is appointed governor of Finland.” [*The Soldiers have meanwhile constructed with their guns and cloaks a species of litter, on which Gustavus is placed.*]

*Gust.* (*partially recovering himself.*) It is my dying will that the conspirators be pardoned. Ankarstrom, approach; Gustavus dies your friend.

*An.* Fiend! madman! Hell-bound that I am to doubt the virtue of a soul like his. Gustavus, you have pardoned me! Yes yes, you could not bear the man whom you’d called friend should perish on the scaffold. I prize and grasp that mercy. Sovereign, friend, the pardon you have granted, I could never ask; but thus, Gustavus. I will do you justice.

[*He has come close to the body of Gustavus—he now snatches a dagger from the girdle of Gustavus, and plunges it into his own heart. He falls in front of the litter of Gustavus, which the Soldiers have now raised on their shoulders to carry to the palace. Amelia, with a shriek, throws herself on her knee over her husband’s body—one hand laid on him, the other grasping that of Gustavus, which hangs over the side of the litter. In the L. H. corner stand the Conspirators, against whom the Soldiers have presented their muskets, but Gustavus, gently raising himself in the litter, by a gesture of his hand, seems to forbid them. The guests of the masquerade on the R. H. are all crowding with anxiety to gaze upon Gustavus, and as the Soldiers begin to withdraw with the litter,*

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